

Nottingham City Council

Companies Governance Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 20 September 2022 from 3.10 pm - 4.50 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Adele Williams

Absent

Councillor Linda Woodings
Councillor Audra Wynter

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Andrew Rule

Nancy Barnard	- Governance and Electoral Services Manager
Ian Edward	- Strategic Advisor for Companies
Stephen Feast	- Director of Transition, Nottingham City Homes
Clive Heaphy	- Interim Corporate Director for Finance and Resources
Kevin Lowry	- Interim Director for Housing

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions are subject to call-in. The last date for call-in is 30 September 2022. Decisions cannot be implemented until the working day after this date.

27 Apologies for absence

Councillor Linda Woodings – unwell
Councillor Audra Wynter – other Council business

28 Declarations of interest

In the interests of transparency, Councillor Neghat Khan declared that she sits on the Board of Futures, and Councillor David Mellen stated that he is a director of Blueprint.

29 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

30 Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted. It was agreed to incorporate the areas of interest identified by the Improvement and Assurance Board into the work programme.

31 Companies Governance Handbook - Constitution Framework Document

Clive Heaphy and Ian Edward presented a report on the proposed Companies Governance Handbook. The following points were discussed:

- (a) The purpose of the handbook is to support the Council in ensuring the governance of its companies is fit for purpose and in line with best practice. It has been developed from a number of sources including the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) and Lawyers in Local Government.
- (b) The draft has been shared with officers across the Council, representatives of Council companies and the Improvement and Assurance Board.
- (c) The document sets out established ways of working in a single document, has a simple structure, covers key issues including managing conflicts of interest, and is intended to be a consolidated guide for those working with companies

Resolved, to approve the Companies Governance Handbook as a Governance Framework Document, a supporting document to the Council's Constitution.

- **Reasons for decision**

To further the progress of the companies' theme of the Together for Nottingham Plan, the Council has consolidated the relevant areas of best practice for the management and oversight of its companies and commercial interests in a single governance framework document. Endorsement of the document will enable the Shareholder Unit of the Council to apply and monitor the achievement by the Council and its companies of a clear set of required standards.

- **Other Options Considered**

To not adopt the Companies Governance Handbook as a Governance Framework Document. This option was rejected as the Handbook is considered an essential resource for the Shareholder Unit.

32 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Homes

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation Stephen Feast, Director of Transition, Nottingham City Homes (NCH), which highlighted the following:

- a) Three companies make up the NCH Group structure – NCH as an Arms-Length Management Organisation for the Council's Housing stock, NCH Enterprises which was established to operate commercially and generate

profit, and NCH Registered Provider which manages homelessness accommodation and some affordable housing.

- b) Services provided by NCH include homelink, estate management, repairs and maintenance, asset management, independent living and tenancy sustainment services. Services and housing are provided across the whole of the city.
- c) The environment in which NCH is operating has changed significantly in the last 12 months. Following the decision to taking housing services back in house a very positive, joined up approach has developed between NCH and Nottingham City Council (NCC) and good progress is being made. The cost of living increase, following on from Covid, has put financial pressure on both tenants and the company with increasing costs and expectations of services. Significant changes are coming through in relation to the management and maintenance of the housing stock including a new inspection regime and building safety measures. Demand for Council housing also remains very high and the City itself has a constricted social housing market with a very small housing association sector.
- d) Tenant satisfaction has remained largely static with a small increase on the previous year. Across the board, satisfaction levels are generally in the upper quartile. Performance on building safety requirements shows very high levels of compliance.
- e) Service highlights include the Housing to Health scheme that has supported 38 people coming out of hospital since April with a further 78 currently being supported, the permanent rehousing of 78 families from temporary accommodation, the delivery of £214,000 of energy vouchers and £325,000 of shopping vouchers through the Household Support Fund, and the completion of the 5 years Grander design scheme which upgraded communal areas in 59 Independent Living Schemes.
- f) Areas for future focus include reducing the number of empty homes, improving customer satisfaction with responsive, planned and programmed repairs, and improving the availability and contactability of Housing Patch Managers.

During discussion and in response to questions from the Committee, the following points were raised:

- g) There are challenges with the size of the waiting list for properties and how people can be supported into housing. The picture regarding housing supply is complex and cannot be fixed quickly but work can be done with other landlords and housing associations. However, the allocation of properties is regularly audited and has been found to be fair and properly administrated.
- h) Covid increased the number of void properties as people were less willing or able to move during the pandemic.
- i) When an application is rejected reasons are provided to the applicant but these can be looked at to ensure they provide the best information to help people understand why their application was unsuccessful.

33 Exclusion of the public

The Committee resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

34 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Homes

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation by Stephen Feast, Director of Transition, Nottingham City Homes.

35 Council owned companies - financial update

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

Ian Edward, Strategic Advisor for Companies, presented the report, updating the Committee on the latest position in respect of Council owned companies

36 Company Review

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

Ian Edward, Strategic Advisor for Companies, presented the report, updating the Committee on a review of a Council owned company.